

# REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

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Tuesday, April 20. 1708.

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**I**N my Last I look'd abroad, and now I come to look at home ; I view'd then the State of Affairs as to the War with France, I must view now the State of the War with Jacobinism and *High-Fliers* ; that fatal War of Parties which has for so many Years embroil'd this unhappy Nation ; and in this Strife where shall I begin ?

Shall I begin at the House of GOD, where Himself will begin in his Judgments, when he comes as a Refiner, and when he marks out for Destruction, and begins at the Sanctuary ? Miserable Nation ! How is a mortal Feud entred into our Sacred Things, and particularly among our Holy Men ? Here's One bids stand off, I am more Holy than thou, and at the same time for Lewdness out-sins the Stews, for Loudness out-gails

the Sons of Strife, for Lying out goes Mr. R—n, for Malice the Reverend K. or M. or B. or the worst of the furious Race—Another cries out for Christianity and Occasional Sincerity, but damns Moderation as a Phanatical Plot—Again, P. dissents in Worship, but conforms in Crime, and G. tho' strict in Morals, most immorally condemns unheard all that reach not the Infallibility, he himself pretends to.

Shall I come to the Pulpit ? Instead of common Charity for one another, What Anathema's thunder from that Sacred Place, upon their disagreeing Comrades ? How do they preach Strife for the Gospel of Peace, preach themselves instead of preaching Christ Jesus, and preach for themselves not for the Good of their Heavers ?

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Should I descend to Particulars, and name Persons, I must make this a second Part to the Grounds and Reasons of the Contempt of the Clergy; for who can help having contemptible Thoughts of Men, who put the Wildfire of their own Passions to the cool, calm, still Voice of the Gospel, and employ Religion to confound and destroy that World it was design'd to civilize and reform.

Gentlemen of the *High Church*, will you hearken to the Advice was given from the Pulpit, by a Reverend and Venerable Father of your own Church, whose Name, if I should tell it you, would fill you with Blushes, that you should so little practise, what he has so gravely and so significantly proposed— *It makes our Hearts bleed, says he, to see so much Strife and Contention among Christians, on Points which are so far from being Essential to the Christian Religion, that they are not Essential to our common Happiness.*— Would to G O D we could all the Christian more, and that all the Emulation and all the Contention, that was now among us, were to be about who lives best, who should preach best, and practise most agreeably to the Rules of Christianity, there would be so much Humility in this Strife, but according to the Blessed Apostles Rule, we should every Man esteem each other better than Himself.—

I cannot but joyn in regretting wide Breaches for narrow Disputes; Things that might be reduc'd into a very small Compass, and yet by the Industry of wicked Men are dilated into all the wildest Extremes, till English Men are ready to cut one anothers Throats for Peace Sake, and send one another to Hell, because they cannot agree about which Way they shall go to Heaven.

But I avoid entring into this melancholly and unhappy Dispute; it come from our Religious to our Politick Contentions, and certainly in this we are the most unhappy People in the World, the most inconsistent with our selves, and the most unaccountably blinded by our Passions, and subdued by our Prejudices— And this so founded upon wretched Trifles, that no People in the World ever invaded their own Peace, on such trivial, incongruous, unconcerted Occasions.

Let us examine but the Contradictions now moving in this Island, and let any Nation in the World match them if they can: Here Jacobites swear to the QUEEN, and yet remain Jacobites, Whigs act against Principle, and yet remain Whigs; in the North the Presbyterian scruples the Abjuration, and yet abhors the Jacobite Cause, the Episcopal Man takes it, and yet adheres to James VIII. (Anglice the Pretender) the many Sects in Politicks exceed those in Religion; the QUEEN is in danger from swearing Protestants, and yet safe from enlightened Papists— Those that cannot swear take up Arms against the Invasion, and those that swallow all sorts of Oaths wish and wait for it.

Shall we come nearer the Publick Affairs; how do we see the Patriots of Liberty practising the grossest Corporation Tyranny, those that pretend to be for the Revolution long for, and put their Hands to the Work of a Revolution, and would bring upon us the very Tyrants they expell'd; in Politicks no bounds are observ'd, but these Contradictions flow on every band, and as Confusion ought always to agree with it self, so indeed it compleatly finishes the signification of the Word, for all things they do are contradicting and inconsistent, and it seems to me, one of the hardest things in the World to give an Account of them; and I am perswaded, had Solomon in his Days, known such a Generation of People as these, he would have added it to his three Things that were too wonderful for him.

We have a new Society of Gentlemen, they say, set up, who answer difficult Questions, solve Enigma's, and unfold Mysterie's; I wish they would tell me, if it lies in their way, asking their Pardon, for putting a Question or two to them, that no body could ever Answer; What is the Signification of such Words as these?

1. A Priest swearing to QUEEN ANN, and praying for King James III.
2. A Lay-Man taking the Abjuration, and pursuing a Jacobite Interest.
3. A Non-Jurant Rebeasal defending the Church of England.

4. A drove of Parsons at . . . . Coffee-House, crying up the *Rehearsal*, that cryes them all down as Schismaticks.  
 5. Proposals for Uniting the Church of *England* with the Church of *France*, and entirely abhorring all manner of Union with *English* Dissenters, to the Glory of both the Charity and Principles of the Church of *England*.

*Vide* *Lesley's Regale and Pontificate.*

Help, help, Gentlemen, of *A POLL*, or of any Society or Oracle in the World, that can dive into these hidden Works of Darkness : In the abundant Sence of my own incapacity, to define these unsignifying Novelties, I am your humble Petitioner ; That you would be pleas'd to unfold a few of these Mysteries, and I shall not fail to make Publick Acknowledgment of your Skill.

O *Bickerstaff*, *Bickerstaff*, wonderful *Bickerstaff*, Esq; here is work to puzzle your Oracle ! you, that in so wonderful a manner, foretel the Fate of Men to Hours and Moments, no matter whether they come to

pass or no, for according to the Great Sir *Richard Buckley*, it is not essential to a True Prophet, that what he Prophecies should come to pass ; wherefore, I humbly entreat this great Genius, that so exactly foretold the Death of Mr. *Partridge* the *Almanack*-maker, that his Elegy was cry'd about streets the very day, and you know, Men's Elegies are never made till they are dead : O Esquire, Esquire, tell us, tell us, if you can, the Meaning of some of these strange and wonderfuls.

But if you cannot tell us the Meaning, for indeed if you do, you must have an Art beyond the D....l ; Why then, pray Gentlemen, tell us something of their Consequences ; tell us what the People mean by these Contradictions, and if you cannot, I shall tell you a little of it my self ; and really Gentlemen, could I draw the Picture lively enough, could I describe effectually, the Consequences of our miserable Divisions ; the Picture would make, even those very Gentlemen start at it, that in their Practice form it ; I shall make a short Essay at it in my next.

## MISCELLANEA.

Perfect Tranquility in *Scotland*, stark calm, all quiet, that is the Word now in all our News ; the *French* gone back again *re infâle*, the Danger entirely over, our Fleet come away, and our Army returning, and all as you were ; the DIVERSI-ON of our Forces, one of the main Ends of the *French*, disappointed, and our Troops in a fair way, of being back again in *Flor-  
ders* time enough, to be at the Opening of the Campaign.

Well, we come to give you all Joy of the short Campaign, and of your Deliverance from the Dangers that threaten'd — But pray, Gentlemen of *Britain*, have you bought any *French* Spectacles, have you obtain'd by this Great Attempt any help to your Politick Eye-fight ? — The *French* have, GOD be prais'd, done us no harm, but have they done us no good ? let me talk

with you a little about the Good they have done us.

It has always been *England's* Fate, and will, I doubt not so as to Great *Britain*, to have our Enemies be our Instructors, nay, to have our very Destroyers prove our Deliverers : *I cannot* deny, but it is a Testimony of National Blindness and intollerable Obstinacy ; but I am not talking now of what it is a Testimony of, *so it is*, and so I am afraid it will be to the end of the Chapter.

To go back but a little way, and not out of Memory ; it was King *Charles II.* by his unufferable Impositions, open'd the Eyes of that very Parliament, which he had blinded by his Pensions and Bribes ; King *James* himself, even as I might say, with his own Hands, brought on the Revolution, and lifted up the Hands of their

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